



Location - Begins in Orofino at Idaho 7 and junction of Wells Bench Road, crosses the North Fork of the Clearwater at Dent Bridge, then to Elk River where it joins Idaho 8 to Bovill.

Length - 57 miles. Allow 2 hours one way.

Roadway - Wells Bench is a two-lane county road paved to one mile beyond Dent Bridge; from there the road surface is gravel; at Elk River the roadway is again a paved two-lane road with slow vehicle turnouts. The route is well maintained year round but can be icy in winter.

When to see it - Throughout the year. Summer offers camping, boating, fishing, hiking, and touring. Winter provides snowmobiling on 300 miles and skiing on 20 miles of regularly maintained groomed trails.

Special attractions - City of Orofino; Dent Bridge; Scenic Viewpoint — Confluence of Elk Creek and North Fork Clearwater River (Dworshak Reservoir); Loop Road to USFS Campground & town; Mill Pond & Mill Site; Clearwater Potlatch Timber Protective Association; Elk River downtown; Elk River Historical Museum; Giant Western Redcedar & Morris Cedar Grove; Elk Creek Falls; City of Bovill.

Camping - Three RV Parks in Orofino; campgrounds along Dworshak Reservoir (Canyon Creek & Dent); Elk River has 64 camping sites along Elk Creek Pond, 23 improved sites at the Forest Service campground, and a RV Park with 24 sites; RV Park with 15 sites in Bovill. The forest lands along the byway are open to off road unimproved camping so visitors can choose their own spot off the beaten path.

Services - Full services in Orofino and Elk River; partial services in Bovill.

Contacts - Elk River Lodge & General Store: 208-826-3299 or www.elkriverlodge.net; and Orofino Chamber of Commerce: 208-476-4335 or www.orofino.com; www.northcentralidaho.info, 877-DO-IDAHO.

Elk River Back Country Byway

This is an all natural, no frills, individualistic and unpretentious pathway through rural North Central Idaho. It is a 57-mile route to adventure, fun and relaxation for travelers of all types. Travelers quickly enter a vast evergreen forested landscape that draws one deeper and forward towards the horizon of the Clearwater Mountain range. Through a series of dips and turns the route reveals the diversity of landscapes in this back country region of Idaho.

From Orofino the route begins with a climb up and along Wells Bench where ranchettes and farmsteads are scattered along the benches and between timber patches. As the forested areas get more prevalent, travelers will drop down towards Dworshak Reservoir, crossing Dent Bridge, which is a suspension bridge that provides a link to western Clearwater County and vast forest lands that built the local economy. Along the path there are opportunities to observe wildlife of many types: bear, bobcats, cougar, deer, elk, osprey, songbirds, wild turkeys, possibly wolves and a wide variety of the forest's small woodland creatures. Thirty-four miles from Orofino lies Elk River, a quaint community that has gone full circle: Established as a remote hunting and recreation camp, developed by Potlatch as a mill town (site of the first electric powered mill), only to return to a recreational community in the twenty-first century.

